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## 'Invisible' Agency 20 Years of Age

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NO ROSES and no champagne at an anniversary the other day that was nevertheless a milestone. The enthusiasm on the 20th birthday of the Central Intelligence Agency was supplied by Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey in his own effervescent style. In terms of other intelligence agencies around the world 20 years is hardly a shake-down cruise. The British have been in the intelligence business for centuries. As for the Russians the system under the czars has been vastly expanded by the Communists both within and outside the borders of the Soviet Union. Although resources of men and money are far smaller, professionals award first place to Israel for a network that produces results second to none.

During the shakedown cruise and particularly in the CIA's 20th year a graph of public acceptance of the Agency—or lack of acceptance—here at home would look like the ups and downs of a ski jump. A fascinating study of the American character could be done solely in terms of the reaction to a secret intelligence agency. Is it a necessary adjunct to America's big power role in a world of tumultuous struggle? Or is it an evil excrescence alien to free society?

THE ANSWERS have been clouded by doubts and ambiguities reflecting uncertainty over the American role. Whether it was illusion or reality 25 years ago the United States seemed to many Americans to be happily isolated from the wicked machinations of power and place in Europe and Asia. The age of innocence was summed up when Henry L. Stimson, as Secretary of State, dismantled the code-breaking organization with the remark, "Gentlemen do not read each other's mail."

Along with the soul-searching a vast literature of fact and fiction—often hard to tell one from the other—on the intelligence game has come into being. At the far-out extreme Agent 007 performed miracles of prowess, demolishing Communist spies and winning the favors of fabulously beautiful women. Defectors on both sides of the ideological divide supplied a strange phosphorescent light to the combat in the dark of intelligence forces.

This has helped to obscure the primary function of the CIA as an information-gathering agency. In today's world, given carefully guarded secrecy of the totalitarian states, this is a large order.

Take what is perhaps today's No. 1 assignment. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara has stated that the Soviets are building two antiballistic missile systems. One is being placed around Moscow clearly intended to defend against ICBMs coming from United States. The other being widely deployed across the Soviet Union is probably to protect against enemy bombers.

That word "probably" is the catch. The CIA, so far as can be learned, does not know for sure and that is a serious flaw in the intelligence picture. If the answer could be found with certainty and the widely dispersed system shown to have no relationship to missiles, the United States could conceivably save billions of dollars in nuclear planning.

The pieces of the picture are put together like a mosaic from hundreds of sources. In this way the CIA assembled the mosaic that disclosed the presence in Cuba in 1962 of missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads to most American cities. The evidence confirmed by the U-2 flights brought a confrontation with the Soviets and Nikita Khrushchev's eventual retreat.

CUBA IS, of course, a sore point. The grave miscalculations of both intelligence and military estimates led to the fiasco of the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.

The CIA grew out of the Office of Strategic Services, which in World War II directed a free-wheeling, highly adventurous operation with unlimited money and men. The carry-over of that adventurous spirit along with many of the adventurers in peacetime led, in the view of close observers, to misadventures. The dirty tricks department, officially the clandestine services, seemed to run the show as against the numerically far more important intelligence-gathering operation. Some of the old timers—the anniversary brought out the fact that 803 employees have been with the agency since the start—felt it was a mistake to build the massive headquarters in Virginia on the banks of the Potomac. And how could you keep anything that big a secret?

More than ever before, the CIA is today a professional operation with a professional, Richard Helms, as director. The shakedown cruise is over and one goal is to sustain a tight professional organization with the excesses trimmed away. Judging from gradual acceptance in Congress, the CIA is here to stay as an adjunct of American power.